

Giving Globally

How to Heal the World

Those whom most of us will never see

The 15-page cover story of the current edition of Newsweek is Giving Globally: How to Heal the World.

“How seemingly simple things can make an enormous difference is the focus of our “Giving Globally” cover this week, says Newsweek’s editor (and Episcopalian) Jon Meacham. “The phrase may sound gimmicky and some of our readers may be suffering from what is known as compassion fatigue’ ... there is no shortage of talk about good causes around the world. Talk, though, is one thing, and action is another. By their very nature, problems of global scope often seem insoluble, and some may well be. Interesting people are doing interesting things, however, to try to make at least a few of those problems go away.”

From my 23 years on staff here. I could make a long list of diocesan community projects, programs, outreach in many local communities, admirable responses to crises somewhere in our 14 counties and around the world, and other good things that have happened. Of all the good things on that list, however, I’m becoming most proud of the interesting thing called New Hope that many interesting people among us are doing to try to make at least a few global problems go away and to address some needs of the poor among us.

What is unique about our New Hope capital campaign is that the institution carrying it forward will receive none of the money. Bishop Paul recently wrote to all of us about the question addressed to Jesus that prompted him to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. The questioner who asked who is his neighbor may have been hoping to hear that charity begins at home, an expression not found in the Bible. “The test of our generosity,” Bishop Paul wrote, “is not geography but need, and our efforts for New Hope will help those whom most of us will never see, but whose need is desperate.”

Today’s gospel lesson (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18) seems to me to be about why we do what we do. It’s one of those gospel imperatives that gets to us where the rubber hits the road. The phrase, “those whom most of us will never see” was in my head as I read the passage which begins with Jesus telling us to beware of practicing our piety in order to be seen by others. And when we give alms, not to sound a trumpet to seek the praise of others. And not to pray in order to be seen by others. And not to look dismal when we fast.

I add my own admonition which, I think, is in line with these. Beware of helping people who can help you, solely because they can help you, perhaps even more than you helped them.

In our New Hope campaign, we are being asked to help those whom most of us will never see. In so doing, may our Father who sees in secret reward us with personal transformation.

Thanks.
Bill Lewellis